

THURSDAY  
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## EAGLE TIMES

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*Established in 1914*

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*Focused on Local News*

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## Local leadership

**I**t has been nearly two months since Democrats rejoiced at having taken control of both Houses of the New Hampshire Legislature.

It was a shocking development, especially winning a majority in the House of Representatives for the first time since 1922. No one, even the most optimistic among the party faithful, predicted the win weeks before the election.

Now, as they say, the hard work is about to begin: governing as a majority.

Earlier this month, three local Democratic state reps. were named to leadership positions in the House. Jay Phinizy of Acworth will chair the Environment and Agriculture Committee; Tom Donovan of Claremont will be vice chairman of the Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee; and Peter Franklin of Newport will serve as chairman of the Division 1 of the Finance Committee.

All three representatives are veterans of the legislative process in Concord and are familiar to their fellow lawmakers. They are also dedicated and knowledgeable and bring a wealth of experience to a wide range of issues. Finally, there is the potential advantage to Sullivan County. However, that advantage can also become a big disadvantage if legislators appear to be working solely for the interests of their constituents at the expense of the entire state.

We don't foresee that happening here.

Phinizy, Donovan and Franklin certainly have their convictions and principles about what is important and how things could be made better for New Hampshire residents locally and beyond, but they are not deep-seated partisans and will consider the statewide effects of any legislation. Nevertheless, it is a balancing act to be in the majority: tempering power with respect and time for all viewpoints.

While Democrats have a comfortable majority of 78 seats in a House of 400, that is not an overwhelming majority. Listening to and working with Republicans, who often lacked these skills while in power, is key to gaining passage of any legislation.

In recent *Eagle Times* interviews, Phinizy, Donovan and Franklin spoke about their priorities, including helping the elderly remain longer in their homes and price support for dairy farmers.

The next legislative session will be a new, different and challenging experience for everyone.